

firsthand. I was especially privileged to work with the Springboard Home for Youth in Crisis, a place that provides hope and healing for troubled girls in southern Arizona.

Not many organizations can say they have had the impact that Teen Challenge of Arizona has had. It was an honor to be able to contribute to their success. I wish them a happy 50th anniversary and many years of continuing success serving our community. They are literally changing and saving lives every single day.

PATCHWORK EXTENSIONS AREN'T GOOD ENOUGH

(Ms. NORTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, 65 Republicans joined 54 Democrats in voting "no" on the extension of the highway bill to register their disgust with 33 extensions while the Republican Congress then did zero work on a long-term bill.

There are now four long-term Democratic bills and one bipartisan bill. However, today's 34th patchwork extension cannot be applied to even start on the Nation's backlog without assurance of funds to complete construction. Yet House Republicans have now fled for an early vacation.

Eighteen States and the District of Columbia have passed State user gas fee laws without retaliation by the voters, but the federal share is more than half of the funds needed just to get started.

The only way to stop the self-inflicted deterioration of our once magnificent infrastructure is to man up and pass a long-term bill.

H.R. 1994 CONTAINS COMMONSENSE REFORMS

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Chairman JEFF MILLER and the members of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs for their work in helping pass H.R. 1994, which passed the House today. The measure contains commonsense reforms so that any VA employee who engages in misconduct or is performing poorly can be terminated or demoted.

I am also very pleased that H.R. 1994 contains additional important protections for VA whistleblowers. We have worked with several of them over the last couple years out of the Oakland office and other centers that have been retaliated against for speaking out about gross mismanagement and possible violations of law.

This is a very important covenant we would have with our whistleblowers so they could come forward and help us to have better VA performance. It is very

critical we have the ability for them to come forward.

I am glad that we have this measure here. I hope the Senate will take it up and pass it so we have better service for our veterans through the VA.

REMEMBERING GWENDOLYN STRONG

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor the life of Gwendolyn DeBard Strong, who passed away this past Saturday after a heroic, inspiring battle with spinal muscular atrophy.

Simply put, she is our hero. Gwendolyn died a few months short of her eighth birthday, far exceeding the odds that were given to her at birth. In her short life, she had more of an impact and brought more joy to others than many ever could in their lifetime.

Gwendolyn's life was spent on the same things many young girls do—playing princesses with friends, going to school, and spending time with her sister.

She and her family also used their voice to improve the lives of all of us. The Strong's worked hard to end lifetime and annual caps on insurance coverage, improve spinal muscular atrophy research, and promote innovations to make the lives of other children with debilitating diseases a little easier.

She and her incredible family taught those of us in Santa Barbara and around the country that we should never give up. Thanks to her bravery and the efforts of Bill and Victoria, we never will.

I am honored to have known her and take solace in knowing that her efforts will continue to help so many others.

We miss you, Gwendolyn, but want you to know we will never give up.

LANCE CORPORAL SQUIRE WELLS

(Mr. LOUDERMILK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, this last Sunday, my family and I attended church at the First Baptist Church of Woodstock in Woodstock, Georgia.

It is not the first time we ever attended that church, as we have worshipped there before; but it is possibly the most memorable time that I will have attended that church because it was at this service that we were having the funeral of Lance Corporal Squire Wells, who is known to his friends and family as Skip. Skip was the youngest of those who were killed in the terrorist attack in Chattanooga.

As we were driving to the church, Mr. Speaker, as we were still miles away from the church, along the sides of the road, we began to see American citi-

zens, citizens of the 11th Congressional District lining the road, holding American flags and Marine Corps flags. As we approached closer to the church, the hundreds of people turned into thousands of people.

As we arrived at the church, nearly 500 members of the Patriot Guard Riders, Marine Corps League, the VFW, and the American Legion were standing, lining the sidewalks of this church, bearing American flags to say good-bye and to say thank you to a patriot.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to also say thank you to Skip Wells—Lance Corporal Wells. Although, to my knowledge, we never met in person, I didn't know him personally, but I do know the type of person he is because he was a marine, which told me that he held to the highest standards of decorum and morale and integrity.

He was a Christian who served faithfully in the First Baptist Church of Woodstock, which tells me he had a heart of charity and love.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you to Skip Wells for laying down his life for my freedom, the freedom of my children, and my granddaughter. I want to say thank you to Ms. Cathy Wells, his mom, for raising such a fine person as a single mom raising her only child, who has given his life in defense of this Nation.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the thousands of people from my district who came out and honored the life of this American patriot.

DON'T LEAVE THE EX-IM BANK IN A ZOMBIELIKE STATE

(Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, this Chamber is doing a great disservice to small-business owners and to hundreds of thousands of American workers by going off to recess for the next 6 weeks without renewing the charter of the U.S. Export-Import Bank. It is the wrong thing to do.

Sadly, the minority of ideologues in this Chamber that is blocking the renewal of the Ex-Im's charter is absolutely right about one thing. If the U.S. Ex-Im goes under, all the export business and all the jobs supported by it will be just displaced to other companies.

What they don't mention in their rants against the Bank is that the companies that will get this business will be in other countries and the workers who get those good-paying jobs will be overseas because there are some 85 foreign export credit agencies today happy to help the companies in their countries seal the deal.

We are leaving thousands of American workers at a real competitive disadvantage by leaving the U.S. Export-Import Bank in a zombielike status.

We should renew it. We should keep these jobs in America. We should put more Americans to work.